

KATHMANDU -- The Women's Leadership Academy (WLA) announced today that it will hold a workshop on the budgetary process for women members of the Constituent Assembly (CA) June 11-13. The sessions will be held at Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, Kathmandu from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. At least 25 CA members from eight political parties will attend.

The workshop is designed to help increase the knowledge and expertise of CA members as they start the budget consideration process in early July. Women CA members will consider issues such as whether the Nepal budget process should be changed to ensure a more transparent and accessible system under the new republic.

Dr. Shankar Sharma, former vice chairman of the National Planning Commission, who will present at the workshop, said, "Such assistance with the budgetary process will help parliamentarians and the citizens become more involved in that process resulting in an open dialogue that is responsive to the public's needs and desires."

International expert David Pelchefsky will discuss budgeting, comparative budgets and assist in analyzing and helping CA members prepare budgets. National Democratic Institute (NDI) Country Director Sherrie Wolff will discuss the importance of gender in the budget process and the strategic and political roles that budgets play in the lives of Nepali citizens. "The information discussed in this workshop will be critical to CA/Parliament members when they are presented with the budget in early July," said Wolff.

The workshop is a component of the Women's Leadership Academy (WLA), established by NDI last July with funding provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The WLA strives to help women leaders participate in governance by building and strengthening their political knowledge and skills, particularly in the constitution drafting process, public speaking, advocacy, and policy development. To date, over 170 women including 102 CA members, have participated in the WLA.

For more than a decade, NDI has worked to increase the number and effectiveness of women political leaders and activists at the grassroots level throughout Nepal. It has also trained over 14,000 women as candidates and community leaders in campaign outreach skills.

NDI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sherrie Wolff, country director or Jay Nishaant, deputy country director at 4442079/4438873 or visit www.ndi.org .